

CITY OF SAN DIEGO, CALIFORNIA
COUNCIL POLICY

CURRENT

SUBJECT: BIOSOLIDS BENEFICIAL USE
POLICY NO.: 400-02
EFFECTIVE DATE: February 27, 1995

BACKGROUND:

Since the mid-1970's, the City has entered into service contracts for the beneficial use or disposal of biosolids (sludge) dewatered and dried on Fiesta Island. Requests for bids have been issued and contracts have been awarded to the single, lowest cost, responsive bidder. This method of approach has not been trouble free. In the mid-1980s all of the sludge dewatered on Fiesta Island was hauled to a disposal site near Brown Field that was subsequently disallowed by the San Diego Regional Water Quality Control Board. The material was removed and transported to an acceptable site at a substantial additional cost to the City.

A second incident occurred in 1993 when the City terminated its contract with Chino Corona Farms due to breach of contract. The City's only recourse at the time of termination was to call upon an emergency hauler who disposed of the biosolids at a unit cost more than twice the cost the City was charged by Chino Corona Farms.

State law (AB 939) requires the diversion of recyclable material, such as biosolids, from landfills. Reliance on landfill disposal for all of the City's biosolids is inconsistent with the intent of California AB 939. Federal regulations (40 CFR Part 503) endorse biosolids beneficial uses. The Interim Order issued to the City by the United States District Court in August 1994 calls for implementation of the Biosolids Beneficial Use Plan to maximize the cost effective reuse of sewage sludge with the goal of complete beneficial reuse. Landfill costs have escalated at a much higher rate than inflation over the past five years and this trend is expected to continue. In the past the City has had the luxury of stockpiling biosolids on Fiesta Island while arrangements were being made for emergency hauling. This opportunity will no longer be available after sludge processing operations are removed from Fiesta Island. In addition, recycling biosolids is an environmentally responsible activity. The organic content of the biosolids can provide nutrients to soil damaged by years of commercial fertilizer use.

PURPOSE:

The purpose of this policy is to express the City's commitment to a diversified biosolids management program that recognizes that biosolids are a resource suitable for beneficial use.

A diversified biosolids management program can avoid high costs for emergency operations. The Biosolids Beneficial Use Plan is a strategic plan that recommends the City direct its biosolids to multiple contractors operating concurrently to produce diverse biosolids beneficial use products for distribution and sale to different markets. The strategy is designed to provide reliable, low risk, and competitively priced recycling of biosolids.

It is the intent of the City Council to maximize the beneficial use of biosolids as well as to adopt a balance of risk and cost by mixing higher cost/lower risk biosolids beneficial use or disposal options with lower cost/higher risk options. The long term result of this policy will be manageable risk and a flexible, reliable program with acceptable cost.

POLICY:

It is the policy of the City Council to diversify the beneficial use and disposal of biosolids and allow the award of biosolids hauling and processing contracts to multiple contractors. Such contracts may be awarded to other than the single, lowest cost, responsive bidder.

The Biosolids Beneficial Use Plan prepared in 1993 and any future updates of the plan will be used the strategic plan that will guide implementation of this policy.

HISTORY:

“Connection To The San Diego Aqueduct”

Adopted by Resolution R-169950 03/15/1962

Repealed by Resolution R-212003 11/14/1974

“Biosolids Beneficial Use”

Adopted by Resolution R-285406 02/27/1995